

(19)

Europäisches Patentamt  
European Patent Office  
Office européen des brevets



(11)

**EP 0 951 889 A1**

(12)

**EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:  
27.10.1999 Bulletin 1999/43

(51) Int Cl.<sup>6</sup>: **A61F 13/15, A61F 13/46,**  
**A61F 13/42, A61L 15/56**

(21) Application number: **99303062.6**

(22) Date of filing: **20.04.1999**

(84) Designated Contracting States:  
**AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU**  
**MC NL PT SE**  
Designated Extension States:  
**AL LT LV MK RO SI**

(30) Priority: **20.04.1998 JP 10968898**

(71) Applicant: **UNI-CHARM CORPORATION**  
**Kawanoe-shi Ehime-ken (JP)**

(72) Inventors:  
• **Wada, Mitsuhiro,**  
**c/o Research & Development Div.**  
**Mitoyo-gun, Kagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP),**  
• **Kido, Tsutomu,**  
**c/o Research & Development Division**  
**Mitoyo-gun, Kagawa-ken 769-1602 (JP)**

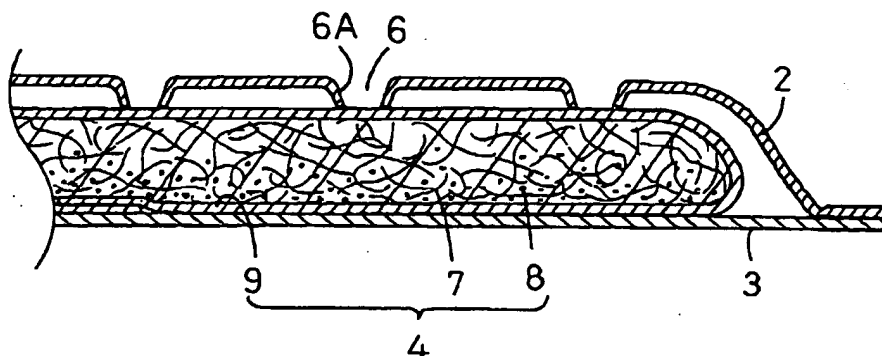
(74) Representative: **Parry, Christopher Stephen**  
**Saunders & Dolleymore,**  
**9 Rickmansworth Road**  
**Watford, Herts. WD1 7HE (GB)**

(54) **Disposable body fluids absorbent article**

(57) A disposable body fluids absorbent article includes a topsheet 2 having a plurality of apertures 6 extending therethrough and an absorbent core 4 covered

with the topsheet 2, the topsheet 2 and core 4 are colored so as to ensure a color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) in NBS unit between the topsheet 2 and portions of the core 4 which are seen through the apertures 6.

**FIG.2**



**EP 0 951 889 A1**

## Description

[0001] The present invention relates to disposable body fluids absorbent articles and, more particularly, to such articles such as sanitary napkins, menstruation pads, panty-liners, disposable diapers and the like.

[0002] Japanese Patent Publication No. Hei5-24783 discloses a technique to provide outer surfaces of body fluids absorbent articles such as sanitary napkins and panty-liners with aesthetic patterns. According to the technique disclosed therein, a body-facing side of the napkin comprises a relatively bright colored outer cover made of a thermoplastic resin sheet and a relatively dark colored inner layer made of a thermoplastic resin sheet. Embossed pattern of the outer cover is held in contact with the inner layer so that individual emboss parts of the outer cover occupied by the embossed pattern may be seen darker than the remainder from an outside of the outer cover.

[0003] The above-mentioned technique can provide the body-facing side of the body fluids absorbent article with an aesthetic appearance and, at the same time, effectively mark a reference zone of the body-facing side when the latter is placed against a wearer's skin by providing only the reference zone with the pattern. However, according to this known technique, the reference zone provided with said pattern is necessarily densified and rigidified as the outer cover is embossed and held in contact with the inner layer. The resultant high rigidity sometimes uncomfortably irritates the wearer's soft skin.

[0004] In view of the problem as has been described above, it is an object of the invention to provide a body-facing side of a disposable body fluids absorbent article with a pattern serving to mark the foregoing reference zone without deterioration of a softness desired for this type article.

[0005] According to the present invention, there is a disposable body fluids absorbent article comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between the topsheet and the backsheet, wherein: the topsheet is formed with a plurality of liquid-pervious apertures each having a diameter of 0.15.0 mm and a color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) of 1.5 or higher in NBS unit is ensured between a color of the topsheet on upper peripheral zones of the apertures and a color of the core on an upper surface thereof which can be seen through the apertures.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing a sanitary napkin according to one embodiment of the present invention as partially broken away;

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary sectional view of the sanitary napkin taken along line II-II in Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a perspective view showing a specific embodiment of the present invention in the form of a blood absorbent pad as partially broken away.

[0006] Details of a disposable body fluids absorbent article according to the present invention will be more fully understood from the description given hereunder with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0007] Fig. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view showing an article in the form of a sanitary napkin as partially broken away and Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the napkin taken along line II-II.

[0008] Napkin 1 comprises a liquid-pervious topsheet 2, a liquid-impervious backsheet 3 and a liquid-absorbent core 4 disposed between the topsheet 2 and the backsheet 3. The topsheet 2 and the backsheet 3 are placed upon each other and bonded together along their portions extending outwardly beyond a peripheral edge of the core 4. The topsheet 2 is made of a plastic film provided with a plurality of apertures 6 each having a diameter of 0.1 ~ 5 mm and colored in white. Each of these apertures 6 is defined by a tubular wall 6A extending from a peripheral edge of the aperture 6 down towards the core 4. The backsheet 3 is made of a plastic film, more preferably, of a breathable but liquid-impervious plastic film. The core 4 is formed by a mixture of fluff pulp and superabsorptive polymer particles 8 covered with a tissue paper 9. The tissue paper 9 is colored in relatively dark blue.

[0009] With this napkin 1, the tissue paper 9 can be seen through the apertures 6 of the topsheet 2. The topsheet 2 is colored in white and the tissue paper 9 is colored in blue so that these two colors may have a color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) of 1.5 or higher in NBS unit. Such relatively high color difference between the color of the topsheet 2 extending around the apertures 6 and the color of the tissue paper 9 seen through these apertures 6 enables a napkin-wearer to easily detect the presence of the apertures 6. Assumed that the tissue paper 9 presents a natural color of pulp itself without being intentionally colored, the color difference would be at most in the order of 0.2 ~ 1 and insufficient to make the wearer aware of the presence of the apertures 6.

[0010] Colors of the topsheet 2 and the tissue paper 9 are not limited to white and blue. Appropriate combination of various colors of them will improve an aesthetic appearance of the napkin 1, particularly of its body-facing side. It is also possible without departing from the spirit and the scope of the present invention to partially color the topsheet 2 as well as the tissue paper 9, instead of entirely coloring them. For example, coloring of the topsheet 2 may be limited to an upper peripheral zone of every aperture 6 and coloring of the tissue paper 9 may be limited to its portions which can be seen through the respective apertures 6.

[0011] Fig. 3 is a fragmentary sectional view showing a body fluids absorbent article in the form a blood absorbent pad 11 as partially broken away. The pad 11 comprises a liquid-pervious topsheet 2 destined to be placed against an affected part or the like and made of a thermoplastic synthetic fiber nonwoven fabric, a liquid-impervious backsheet 3 made of a plastic film and a liq-

liquid-absorbent core 4.

[0012] The topsheet 2 comprises component fibers colored so as to present a relatively deep white tone and provided in its central zone with a plurality of apertures 6 each having a diameter of 1 ~ 5 mm.

[0013] The core 4 comprises a package 12 including a mixture of fluff pulp and superabsorptive polymer particles 8 wrapped with a tissue paper 9, and a cushion sheet 13 made of a spun bond nonwoven fabric disposed between the topsheet 2 and the package 12. The spun bond nonwoven fabric is colored in relatively deep pink so that a color difference of 1.5 or higher may be ensured between the topsheet 2 and the cushion sheet 13. In addition, the spun bond nonwoven fabric is treated to become hydrophilic so that an amount of blood discharged on the topsheet 2 can rapidly transfer to the package 12.

[0014] With the pad 11 arranged as has been described above, the pink-colored cushion sheet 13 can be seen through the apertures 6 provided in a central zone of the pad 11 and the color facilitates a user of the pad 11 to recognize the central zone of the pad 11. Accordingly, the user can accurately and rapidly place the central zone against an affected part or the like. If the topsheet 2 is adapted to be pervious for body fluids only through its apertures 6, handling of the pad 11 will be further facilitated by the fact that visual detection of the apertures 6 can be easy for the user.

[0015] The body fluids absorbent article according to the present invention facilitate the user thereof to visually detect the apertures of the topsheet because of a color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) of 1.5 or higher in NBS unit can be ensured between the topsheet and the portions of the liquid-absorbent core which can be seen through the apertures. Such measure used to facilitate the visual detection of the apertures never rigidifies the topsheet as well as the liquid-absorbent core and therefore never deteriorates a soft touch of this article.

ing to Claim 1, wherein each of said apertures is defined by a tubular wall extending from a peripheral edge thereof down towards the said core.

- 5 3. A disposable body fluids absorbent article according to Claim 1, wherein said topsheet is made of either of a plastic film and a nonwoven fabric.

#### Claims

1. A disposable body fluids absorbent article comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said topsheet and said backsheet, wherein:

said topsheet is formed with a plurality of liquid-pervious apertures each having a diameter of 0.1 ~ 5.0 mm and a color difference ( $\Delta E$ ) of 1.5 or higher in NBS unit is ensured between a color of said topsheet on upper peripheral zones of said apertures and a color of said core on an upper surface thereof which can be seen through said apertures.

2. A disposable body fluids absorbent article accord-

FIG.1

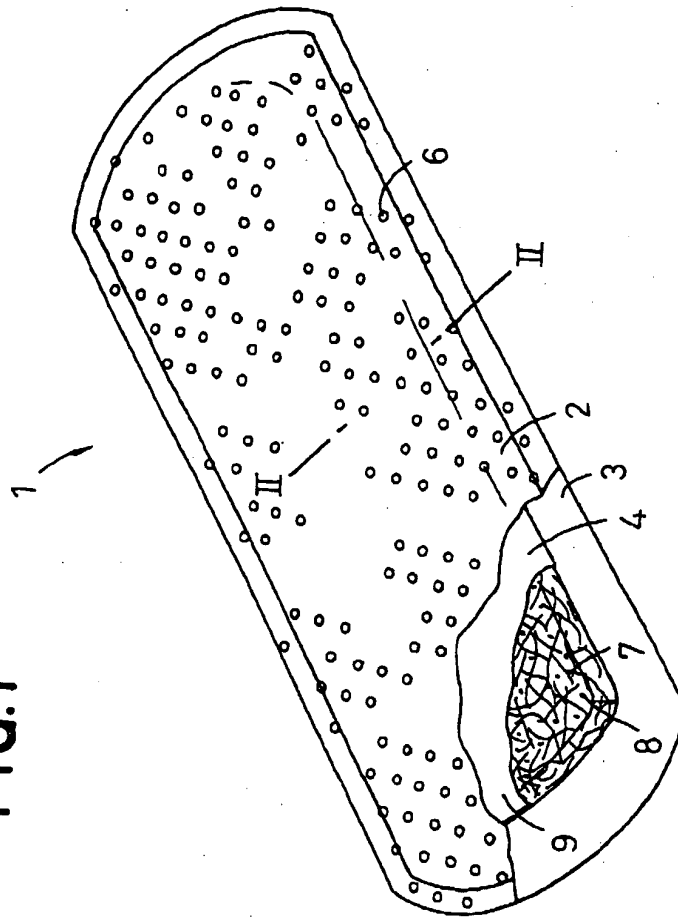


FIG.2

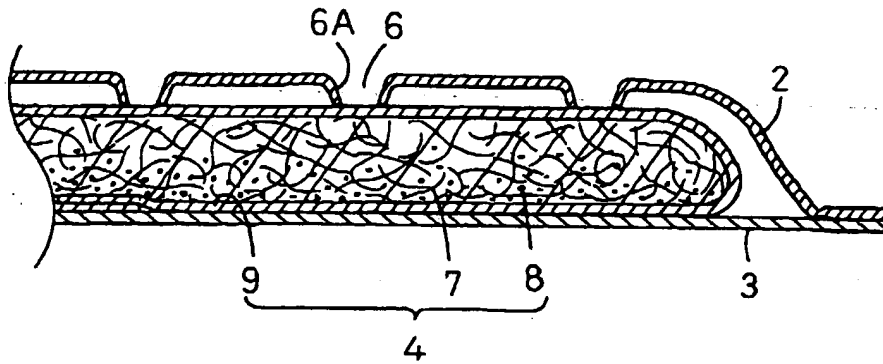
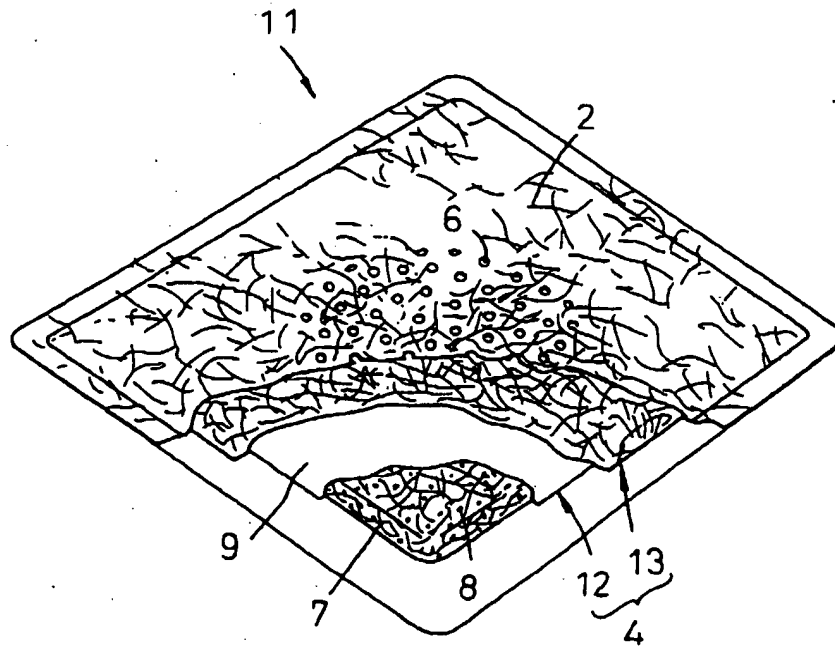


FIG.3



EP 0 951 889 A1



European Patent  
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			EP 99303062.6
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 6)
A, D	<u>EP 0140560 A1</u> (PERSONAL PRODUCTS COMPANY) 08 May 1985, claims, fig., page 7, lines 1-14. --	1, 3	A 61 F 13/15 A 61 F 13/46 A 61 F 13/42 A 61 L 15/56
A	<u>US 5690624 A</u> (SASAKI et al.) 25 November 1997, claims, column 2, lines 48, 49, fig.. --	1, 3	
A	<u>US 5454800 A</u> (HIRT et al.) 03 October 1995, claims 1, 27, column 3, lines 10-26, column 10, lines 6-16, 29-34. --	1, 3	
A	<u>US 4022211 A</u> (TIMMONS et al.) 10 May 1977, claims, column 2, lines 60-63. --	1, 3	TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 6)
A	<u>US 3918454 A</u> (KORODI et al.) 11 November 1975, claims, fig.. ----	1	A 61 F A 61 L
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search VIENNA		Date of completion of the search 26-07-1999	Examiner SCHÄFER
<p><b>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</b></p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application I : document cited for other reasons &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

EP 0 951 889 A1 (1999)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO. EP 99303062.6**

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned search report.  
The members are as contained in the EPIDOS INPADOC file on 30.7.1999.  
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date	
EP A1	140560	08-05-1985	AT E 38770	15-12-1985
			AU A1 33055/84	21-03-1986
			AU B2 568662	07-01-1986
			BR A 9404631	06-08-1986
			CA A1 1229201	17-11-1987
			EP B1 140560	23-11-1989
			FR U 262256	01-01-1987
			FR Y 393926	16-09-1987
			GB Y1 263926	16-09-1987
			DE A 803748	17-01-1985
			HE A 265789	14-04-1985
			IE B 56688	19-12-1990
			JP A2 60097249	03-04-1985
			JP B4 5024793	08-04-1993
			MX A 160535	19-03-1990
			NZ A 209403	21-12-1990
			PT A 79205	01-10-1984
			PT B 79205	28-10-1984
			SG A 16789	02-06-1989
			US A 4623340	19-11-1996
			ZA A 8407286	30-04-1986
			ZN A 156784	16-04-1986
US A	5454800	03-10-1995	AU A1 68264/94	12-12-1994
			AU B2 680910	14-08-1997
			BR A 9406286	26-12-1995
			CA AA 2164263	13-11-1994
			CN A 1124448	12-06-1996
			EP A1 774946	28-05-1997
			FR B1 2705028	18-11-1994
			FR B1 2705028	27-10-1995
			JP T2 6516150	29-10-1996
			WO A1 9426221	24-11-1994
US A	4023211	10-05-1977	none	
US A	3918454	11-11-1975	none	
US A	5690624	25-11-1997	AU A1 71945/96	05-06-1997
			AU B2 703558	25-03-1999
			BR A 9604628	23-06-1998
			CA AA 2191421	30-05-1997
			CN A 1158244	03-09-1997
			EP A1 776645	04-06-1997
			JP A2 9140742	03-06-1997

For more details about this annex see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82.

2010-2011

2011-2012